

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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January 20, 2011

Presidential Proclamation on Religious Freedom Day 2011	1
President Obama and China's Hu Work Toward Greater Cooperation	1
U.S.-China Joint Statement.....	2
Sudan's Referendum Marks "Historic Milestone"	7
Solar Lights Bring Life to Afghan Capital	8

Presidential Proclamation on Religious Freedom Day 2011

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
January 14, 2011

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY, 2011 BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**A PROCLAMATION**

Our Nation was founded on a shared commitment to the values of justice, freedom, and equality. On Religious Freedom Day, we commemorate Virginia's 1786 Statute for Religious Freedom, in which Thomas Jefferson wrote that "all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion." The fundamental principle of religious freedom -- guarded by our Founders and enshrined in our Constitution's First Amendment -- continues to protect rich faiths flourishing within our borders.

The writ of the Founding Fathers has upheld the ability of Americans to worship and practice religion as they choose, including the right to believe in no religion at all. However, these liberties are not self-sustaining, and require a stalwart commitment by each generation to preserve and apply them. Throughout our Nation's history, our founding ideal of religious freedom has served as an example to the world. Though our Nation has sometimes fallen short of the weighty task of ensuring freedom of religious expression and practice, we have remained a Nation in which people of different faiths coexist with mutual respect and equality under the law. America's unshakeable commitment to religious freedom binds us together as a people, and the strength of our values underpins a country that is tolerant, just, and strong.

My Administration continues to defend the cause of religious freedom in the United States and around the world. At home, we vigorously protect the civil rights of Americans, regardless of their religious beliefs. Across the globe, we also seek to uphold this human right and to foster tolerance and peace with those whose beliefs differ from our own. We bear witness to those who are persecuted or attacked because of their faith. We condemn the attacks made in recent months against Christians in Iraq and Egypt, along with attacks against people of all backgrounds and beliefs. The United States stands with those who advocate for free religious expression and works to protect the rights of all people to follow their conscience, free from persecution and discrimination.

On Religious Freedom Day, let us reflect on the principle of religious freedom that has guided our Nation forward, and recommit to upholding this universal human right both at home and around the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 16, 2011, as Religious Freedom Day. I call on all Americans to commemorate this day with events and activities that teach us about this critical foundation of our Nation's liberty, and to show us how we can protect it for future generations here and around the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

President Obama and China's Hu Work Toward Greater Cooperation

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama welcomed China's president, Hu Jintao, to the White House January 19, calling for greater cooperation in security and economic relations and for greater respect in China for universal human rights.

"We have an enormous stake in each other's success," Obama said at the formal White House arrival ceremony on the south lawn. "In an interconnected world, in a global economy, nations — including our own — will be more prosperous and more secure when we work together."

It is the eighth time the two world leaders have met face-to-face in two years. Obama visited China in 2009, and extended an invitation for a state visit, which the two leaders agreed to hold in early 2011. The last state visit by a Chinese president was in October 1997 when President Bill Clinton hosted President Jiang Zemin. Hu was greeted with an elaborate 21-gun salute, which generally is reserved for visiting heads of state.

Obama said the United States welcomes China's rapid rise as a prosperous and successful member of the international community. He said the economic benefits of U.S.-China relations have improved the lives of Americans as well as the Chinese, and that cooperation on a range of issues has helped to advance stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

"We also know this: History shows that societies are more harmonious, nations are more successful, and the world is more just when the rights and responsibilities of all nations and all people are upheld, including the universal rights of every human being," Obama said.

Hu thanked Obama for the invitation to visit the United States and offered the best wishes of 1.3 billion Chinese people to all Americans.

"I have come to the United States to increase mutual trust, enhance friendship, deepen cooperation and push forward the positive, cooperative and comprehensive China-U.S. relationship for the 21st century," Hu said at the arrival ceremony.

The United States and China normalized relations 32 years ago. Hu said that since then the relationship the two nations enjoy has grown into one of strategic significance and global influence.

China is a key market for the United States, which exported \$100 billion of goods and services to China, making it the largest U.S. trading partner after Canada and Mexico. The exports support more than half a million U.S. jobs.

The Chinese government announced a series of purchases ranging from jet aircraft and auto parts to agriculture and chemicals, which amounts to more than \$45 billion in new exports for the United States, which will help support an estimated 235,000 U.S. jobs, Obama said.

Obama said the two leaders also discussed China's move toward a more market-oriented economy that is less driven by exports and devotes more to domestic consumption, which will help to ensure a balanced global economic recovery. Obama had previously announced a National Export Initiative to move the U.S. economy over five years toward greater exports and less consumer-driven demand.

"I told President Hu that we welcome China's increasing the flexibility of its currency," Obama told reporters at a joint press conference at the White House. The president said he told Hu that China's currency, the yuan, remains undervalued and that there needs to be further adjustment in the exchange rate.

Obama said currency adjustment would help to boost domestic demand in China and lessen the inflationary pressures in its economy.

North Korea's nuclear weapons development program was featured in the private talks the two leaders had in the Oval Office. Obama said the two also discussed efforts to open dialogue with the Iranian regime about its nuclear

weapon development efforts.

On human rights, Obama said the two leaders agreed to move ahead with formal talks on human rights and to new exchanges to advance the rule of law. Obama called for renewed talks between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama to resolve concerns and differences, including the preservation of the religious and cultural identity of the Tibetan people.

The United States announced plans to increase the number of U.S. students studying in China to 100,000 students.

"The Chinese side appreciates President Obama's commitment to a positive and constructive China policy and to stable and growing China-U.S. relations," Hu told reporters.

Hu said the United States and China support efforts by the Group of 20 advanced economies to play a bigger role in international economic affairs. Both nations are members of the G20.

Obama is hosting a state dinner for Hu at the White House January 19, and U.S. congressional leaders will hold meetings with Hu on January 20 before Hu travels to Chicago for further meetings with U.S. business leaders. Obama and Hu also met with U.S. corporate leaders.

U.S.-China Joint Statement

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
January 19, 2011

U.S. - China Joint Statement
January 19, 2011
Washington, D.C.

1. At the invitation of President Barack Obama of the United States of America, President Hu Jintao of the People's Republic of China is paying a state visit to the United States of America from January 18-21, 2011. During his visit, President Hu met with Vice President Joseph Biden, will meet with U.S. Congressional leadership, and will visit Chicago.

2. The two Presidents reviewed the progress made in the relationship since President Obama's November 2009 State Visit to China and reaffirmed their commitment to building a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive U.S. - China relationship for the 21st century, which serves the interests of the American and Chinese peoples and of the global community. The two sides reaffirmed that the three Joint Communiqués issued by the United States and China laid the political foundation for the relationship

and will continue to guide the development of U.S. - China relations. The two sides reaffirmed respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Presidents further reaffirmed their commitment to the November 2009 U.S. - China Joint Statement.

3. The United States and China committed to work together to build a cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit in order to promote the common interests of both countries and to address the 21st century's opportunities and challenges. The United States and China are actively cooperating on a wide range of security, economic, social, energy, and environmental issues which require deeper bilateral engagement and coordination. The two leaders agreed that broader and deeper collaboration with international partners and institutions is required to develop and implement sustainable solutions and to promote peace, stability, prosperity, and the well-being of peoples throughout the world.

Strengthening U.S. - China Relations

4. Recognizing the importance of the common challenges that they face together, the United States and China decided to continue working toward a partnership that advances common interests, addresses shared concerns, and highlights international responsibilities. The two leaders recognize that the relationship between the United States and China is both vital and complex. The United States and China have set an example of positive and cooperative relations between countries, despite different political systems, historical and cultural backgrounds, and levels of economic development. The two sides agreed to work further to nurture and deepen bilateral strategic trust to enhance their relations. They reiterated the importance of deepening dialogue aimed at expanding practical cooperation and affirmed the need to work together to address areas of disagreement, expand common ground, and strengthen coordination on a range of issues.

5. The United States reiterated that it welcomes a strong, prosperous, and successful China that plays a greater role in world affairs. China welcomes the United States as an Asia-Pacific nation that contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Working together, both leaders support efforts to build a more stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region for the 21st century.

6. Both sides underscored the importance of the Taiwan issue in U.S. - China relations. The Chinese side emphasized that the Taiwan issue concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and expressed the hope that the U.S. side will honor its relevant commitments and appreciate and support the Chinese side's position on this issue. The U.S. side stated that the United States follows its one China policy and abides by

the principles of the three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués. The United States applauded the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and welcomed the new lines of communications developing between them. The United States supports the peaceful development of relations across the Taiwan Strait and looks forward to efforts by both sides to increase dialogues and interactions in economic, political, and other fields, and to develop more positive and stable cross-Strait relations.

7. The United States and China reiterated their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, even as they continue to have significant differences on these issues. The United States stressed that the promotion of human rights and democracy is an important part of its foreign policy. China stressed that there should be no interference in any country's internal affairs. The United States and China underscored that each country and its people have the right to choose their own path, and all countries should respect each other's choice of a development model. Addressing differences on human rights in a spirit of equality and mutual respect, as well as promoting and protecting human rights consistent with international instruments, the two sides agreed to hold the next round of the U.S.- China Human Rights Dialogue before the third round of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED).

8. The United States and China agreed to hold the next round of the resumed Legal Experts Dialogue before the next Human Rights Dialogue convenes. The United States and China further agreed to strengthen cooperation in the field of law and exchanges on the rule of law. The United States and China are actively exploring exchanges and discussions on the increasing role of women in society.

9. The United States and China affirmed that a healthy, stable, and reliable military-to-military relationship is an essential part of President Obama's and President Hu's shared vision for a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive U.S.-China relationship. Both sides agreed on the need for enhanced and substantive dialogue and communication at all levels: to reduce misunderstanding, misperception, and miscalculation; to foster greater understanding and expand mutual interest; and to promote the healthy, stable, and reliable development of the military-to-military relationship. Both sides noted the successful visit of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to China earlier this month, and that the United States welcomes Chief of the PLA General Staff General Chen Bingde to the United States in the first half of 2011. Both sides reaffirmed that the Defense Consultative Talks, the Defense Policy Coordination Talks, and the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement will remain important channels of communication in the future. Both sides will work to execute the seven priority areas for developing

military-to-military relations as agreed to by Secretary Gates and General Xu Caihou, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission in October 2009.

10. The United States and China agreed to take specific actions to deepen dialogue and exchanges in the field of space. The United States invited a Chinese delegation to visit NASA headquarters and other appropriate NASA facilities in 2011 to reciprocate for the productive visit of the U.S. NASA Administrator to China in 2010. The two sides agreed to continue discussions on opportunities for practical future cooperation in the space arena, based on principles of transparency, reciprocity, and mutual benefit.

11. The United States and China acknowledged the accomplishments under the bilateral Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology, one of the longest-standing bilateral agreements between the two countries, and welcomed the signing of its extension. The United States and China will continue to cooperate in such diverse areas as agriculture, health, energy, environment, fisheries, student exchanges, and technological innovation in order to advance mutual well-being.

12. The United States and China welcomed progress by the U.S.-China Joint Liaison Group on Law Enforcement Cooperation (JLG) to strengthen law enforcement cooperation across a range of issues, including counterterrorism. The United States and China also agreed to enhance joint efforts to combat corruption through bilateral and other means.

Promoting High-Level Exchanges

13. The two sides agreed that high-level exchanges are indispensable to strong U.S.-China relations, and that close, frequent, and in-depth dialogue is important to advance bilateral relations and international peace and development. In this spirit, both Presidents look forward to meeting again in the coming year, including in the state of Hawaii for the U.S.-hosted 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' meeting. China welcomed Vice President Biden for a visit in 2011. The United States welcomed a subsequent visit by Vice President Xi Jinping.

14. The two sides praised the S&ED as a key mechanism for coordination between the two governments, and agreed to hold the third round of the S&ED in Washington, D.C., in May 2011. The S&ED has played an important role in helping build trust and confidence between the two countries. The two sides also agreed to hold the second meeting of the High-Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchange in the United States in the spring of 2011, and the 22nd meeting of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) in China in the second half of 2011. The two sides agreed to

maintain close communication between the foreign ministers of the two countries through mutual visits, meetings, and other means.

15. The two sides emphasized the importance of continued interaction between their legislatures, including institutionalized exchanges between the National People's Congress of China and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

Addressing Regional and Global Challenges

16. The two sides believe that the United States and China have a common interest in promoting peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, and agreed to enhance communication and coordination to address pressing regional and global challenges. The two sides undertake to act to protect the global environment and to work in concert on global issues to help safeguard and promote the sustainable development of all countries and peoples. Specifically, the United States and China agreed to advance cooperation to: counter violent extremism; prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery; strengthen nuclear security; eliminate infectious disease and hunger; end extreme poverty; respond effectively to the challenge of climate change; counter piracy; prevent and mitigate disasters; address cybersecurity; fight transnational crime; and combat trafficking in persons. In coordination with other parties, the United States and China will endeavor to increase cooperation to address common concerns and promote shared interests.

17. The United States and China underlined their commitment to the eventual realization of a world without nuclear weapons and the need to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime to address the threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. In this regard, both sides support early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), reaffirmed their support for the early commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, and agreed to work together to reach these goals. The two sides also noted their deepening cooperation on nuclear security following the Washington Nuclear Security Summit and signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will help establish a Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security in China.

18. The United States and China agreed on the critical importance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula as underscored by the Joint Statement of September 19, 2005 and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. Both sides expressed concern over heightened tensions on the Peninsula triggered by recent developments. The two sides noted their continuing efforts to cooperate closely on matters concerning the Peninsula. The United States and China emphasized the

importance of an improvement in North-South relations and agreed that sincere and constructive inter-Korean dialogue is an essential step. Agreeing on the crucial importance of denuclearization of the Peninsula in order to preserve peace and stability in Northeast Asia, the United States and China reiterated the need for concrete and effective steps to achieve the goal of denuclearization and for full implementation of the other commitments made in the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. In this context, the United States and China expressed concern regarding the DPRK's claimed uranium enrichment program. Both sides oppose all activities inconsistent with the 2005 Joint Statement and relevant international obligations and commitments. The two sides called for the necessary steps that would allow for early resumption of the Six-Party Talks process to address this and other relevant issues.

19. On the Iranian nuclear issue, the United States and China reiterated their commitment to seeking a comprehensive and long-term solution that would restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. Both sides agreed that Iran has the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and that Iran should fulfill its due international obligations under that treaty. Both sides called for full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. The United States and China welcomed and will actively participate in the P5+1 process with Iran, and stressed the importance of all parties – including Iran – committing to a constructive dialogue process.

20. Regarding Sudan, the United States and China agreed to fully support the North-South peace process, including full and effective implementation of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The two sides stressed the need for all sides to respect the result of a free, fair, and transparent referendum. Both the United States and China expressed concern on the Darfur issue and believed that further, substantive progress should be made in the political process in Darfur to promote the early, comprehensive, and appropriate solution to this issue. Both the United States and China have a continuing interest in the maintenance of peace and stability in the wider region.

21. The two sides agreed to enhance communication and coordination in the Asia-Pacific region in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, and to work together with other Asia-Pacific countries, including through multilateral institutions, to promote peace, stability, and prosperity.

Building a Comprehensive and Mutually Beneficial Economic Partnership

22. President Obama and President Hu recognized the

vital importance of working together to build a cooperative economic partnership of mutual respect and mutual benefit to both countries and to the global economy. The two leaders agreed to promote comprehensive economic cooperation, and will develop further a framework of comprehensive economic cooperation, relying on existing mechanisms, by the third round of the S&ED in May, based on the main elements outlined below:

23. The two sides agreed to strengthen macroeconomic communication and cooperation, in support of strong, sustainable and balanced growth in the United States, China and the global economy:

- The United States will focus on reducing its medium-term federal deficit and ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability, and will maintain vigilance against excess volatility in exchange rates. The Federal Reserve has taken important steps in recent years to increase the clarity of its communications regarding its outlook and longer run objectives.
- China will intensify efforts to expand domestic demand, to promote private investment in the service sector, and to give greater play to the fundamental role of the market in resource allocation. China will continue to promote RMB exchange rate reform and enhance RMB exchange rate flexibility, and promote the transformation of its economic development model.
- Both sides agree to continue to pursue forward-looking monetary policies with due regards to the ramifications of those policies for the international economy.
- The two sides affirmed support for efforts by European leaders to reinforce market stability and promote sustainable, long-term growth.

24. The two countries, recognizing the importance of open trade and investment in fostering economic growth, job creation, innovation, and prosperity, affirmed their commitment to take further steps to liberalize global trade and investment, and to oppose trade and investment protectionism. The two sides also agreed to work proactively to resolve bilateral trade and investment disputes in a constructive, cooperative, and mutually beneficial manner.

25. The two leaders emphasized their strong commitment to direct their negotiators to engage in across-the-board negotiations to promptly bring the WTO Doha Development Round to a successful, ambitious, comprehensive, and balanced conclusion, consistent with the mandate of the Doha Development Round and built on the progress already achieved. The two sides agreed that engagement between our representatives must

intensify and expand in order to complete the end game.

26. The two leaders agreed on the importance of achieving a more balanced trade relationship, and spoke highly of the progress made on this front, including at the recent 21st Meeting of the JCCT in Washington, D.C.

27. China will continue to strengthen its efforts to protect IPR, including by conducting audits to ensure that government agencies at all levels use legitimate software and by publishing the auditing results as required by China's law. China will not link its innovation policies to the provision of government procurement preferences. The United States welcomed China's agreement to submit a robust, second revised offer to the WTO Government Procurement Committee before the Committee's final meeting in 2011, which will include sub-central entities.

28. The two leaders acknowledged the importance of fostering open, fair, and transparent investment environments to their domestic economies and to the global economy and reaffirmed their commitment to the ongoing bilateral investment treaty (BIT) negotiations, recognizing that a successful BIT negotiation would support an open global economy by facilitating and protecting investment, and enhancing transparency and predictability for investors of both countries. China welcomed the United States' commitment to consult through the JCCT in a cooperative manner to work towards China's Market Economy Status in an expeditious manner. China welcomed discussion between the two sides on the ongoing reform of the U.S. export control system, and its potential implications for U.S. exports to its major trading partners, including China, consistent with U.S. national security interests.

29. The two sides further acknowledged the deep and robust nature of the commercial relationship, including the contracts concluded at this visit, and welcomed the mutual economic benefits resulting from the relationship.

30. The two sides agreed to continue working to make concrete progress on the bilateral economic relationship through the upcoming S&ED and the JCCT process.

31. The United States and China recognized the potential for their firms to play a positive role in the infrastructure development in each country and agreed to strengthen cooperation in this area.

32. The two countries committed to deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation on financial sector investment and regulation, and support open environments for investment in financial services and cross-border portfolio investment, consistent with prudential and national security requirements. The United States is committed to ensuring that the GSEs have sufficient capital and the

ability to meet their financial obligations.

33. The United States and China agree that currencies in the SDR basket should only be those that are heavily used in international trade and financial transactions. In that regard, the United States supports China's efforts over time to promote inclusion of the RMB in the SDR basket.

34. The two countries pledged to work together to strengthen the global financial system and reform the international financial architecture. The two sides will continue their strong cooperation to strengthen the legitimacy and improve the effectiveness of the International Monetary Fund and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). The two sides will jointly promote efforts of the international community to assist developing countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The two sides will also, in partnership with the Multilateral Development Banks, explore cooperation that supports global poverty reduction and development, and regional integration including in Africa, to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

35. The two countries reiterated their support for the G-20 Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth and reaffirmed their commitments made in the Seoul Summit Declaration, including using the full range of policies to strengthen the global recovery and to reduce excessive imbalances and maintain current account imbalances at sustainable levels. The two sides support a bigger role for the G-20 in international economic and financial affairs, and pledged to strengthen communication and coordination to follow through on the commitments of the G-20 summits and push for positive outcomes at the Cannes Summit.

Cooperating on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment

36. The two sides view climate change and energy security as two of the greatest challenges of our time. The United States and China agreed to continue their close consultations on action to address climate change, coordinate to achieve energy security for our peoples and the world, build on existing clean energy cooperation, ensure open markets, promote mutually beneficial investment in climate friendly energy, encourage clean energy, and facilitate advanced clean energy technology development.

37. Both sides applauded the progress made in clean energy and energy security since the launch of the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center, Renewable Energy Partnership, U.S.-China Joint Statement on Energy Security Cooperation, and Energy Cooperation Program (ECP). Both sides reaffirmed their ongoing exchanges on energy policy and cooperation on oil, natural gas

(including shale gas), civilian nuclear energy, wind and solar energy, smart grid, advanced bio-fuels, clean coal, energy efficiency, electric vehicles and clean energy technology standards.

38. The two sides commended the progress made since the launch of the U.S.-China Ten Year Framework on Energy and Environment Cooperation (TYF) in 2008. They agreed to further strengthen practical cooperation under the TYF, carry out action plans in the priority areas of water, air, transportation, electricity, protected areas, wetlands, and energy efficiency, engage in policy dialogues, and implement the EcoPartnerships program. The United States and China were also pleased to announce two new EcoPartnerships. The two sides welcomed local governments, enterprises, and research institutes of the two countries to participate in the TYF, and jointly explore innovative models for U.S.-China energy and environment cooperation. The two sides welcomed the cooperation projects and activities which will be carried out in 2011 under the TYF.

39. The two sides welcomed the Cancun agreements and believed that it is important that efforts to address climate change also advance economic and social development. Working together and with other countries, the two sides agreed to actively promote the comprehensive, effective, and sustained implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the implementation of the Cancun agreements and support efforts to achieve positive outcomes at this year's conference in South Africa.

Expanding People-to-People Exchanges

40. The United States and China have long supported deeper and broader people-to-people ties as part of a larger effort to build a cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. Both sides agreed to take concrete steps to enhance these people-to-people exchanges. Both sides noted with satisfaction the successful Expo 2010 Shanghai, and the Chinese side complimented the United States on its USA Pavilion. The two sides announced the launch of a U.S.-China Governors Forum and decided to further support exchanges and cooperation at local levels in a variety of fields, including support for the expansion of the sister province and city relationships. The United States and China also agreed to take concrete steps to strengthen dialogue and exchanges between their young people, particularly through the 100,000 Strong Initiative. The United States warmly welcomes more Chinese students in American educational institutions, and will continue to facilitate visa issuance for them. The two sides agreed to discuss ways of expanding cultural interaction, including exploring a U.S.-China cultural year event and other activities. The two sides underscored their commitment to further promoting and facilitating increased tourism.

The United States and China agreed that all these activities help deepen understanding, trust, and cooperation.

Conclusion

41. President Hu Jintao expressed his thanks to President Obama and the American people for their warm reception and hospitality during his visit. The two Presidents agreed that the visit has furthered U.S.-China relations, and both sides resolved to work together to build a cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. The two Presidents shared a deep belief that a stronger U.S.-China relationship not only serves the fundamental interests of their respective peoples, but also benefits the entire Asia-Pacific region and the world.

Sudan's Referendum Marks "Historic Milestone"

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — Southern Sudan's referendum on self-determination marks "a historic milestone" for the Sudanese, says Ambassador Princeton Lyman, head of the U.S. State Department's Sudan Negotiation Support Unit.

Lyman testified about Sudan's progress to the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs January 18.

"We have come a long way in a short time. Even just a few months ago, many thought that an on-time, peaceful referendum was impossible — both from a technical and a political standpoint. Yet, it was achieved," Lyman said.

The referendum could lead to the partition of Sudan by establishing an independent state in the South. He said turnout for the January 9-15 vote was "significant," and the polling process was "peaceful and well-organized." Lyman added that international observers, including the United Nations Monitoring Panel on the Referenda in Sudan, have deemed the process credible.

The Sudanese government in Khartoum has said it will accept the outcome of the vote. Lyman said the counting and declaration of preliminary results is under way, though official results are not expected to be released until February.

"Nonetheless, the referendum is not the final chapter of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). There is much work still to be done to ensure that the promise of the referendum leads to lasting peace and stability for all of Sudan," Lyman said.

The referendum is a key part of fully implementing the CPA, which ended the civil war between northern and southern Sudan in 2005. Lyman said no matter the

outcome of the vote, leaders from both sides will need to reach agreement on how to handle future issues "involving citizenship, security, debt, oil, currency and more."

Provided Sudan continues to conduct the referendum peacefully and accepts the results, Lyman said the United States is prepared "to begin the process of withdrawing Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terrorism." He said if Sudan continues meet obligations "critical to both a successful North/South relationship and long-term stability in the region," the United States is ready to move toward improved bilateral relations, including renewed dialogue and an exchange of ambassadors, as well as to commit to an enhanced economic relationship with Sudan.

Solar Lights Bring Life to Afghan Capital

By Karin Rives
Staff Writer

Washington — To Ajmal Khan Zadran, the new solar-powered streetlights in Kabul represent progress and a better future for his young son.

So far, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has spent \$160,000 to install 28 streetlights along a busy commercial street in the Afghan capital. Another 170 or so solar energy lights will go up in coming months.

The project is funded by the Army Corps' Commander Emergency Response Program, which targets projects that directly benefit a local community. The first 28 lights came online in late December 2010 and the remainder will be installed later this year, with total project costs reaching about \$1.6 million.

Zadran, 31, is certain his community benefits. "Street lighting will decrease street crime so people can go outside, even until late night," he told America.gov. "Kabul will look like a versatile and modern city."

The U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State helped make the project happen, as did Kabul Mayor Muhammad Yunus Nawandish, who is trying to boost economic development in the downtown area.

Only 20 percent of streets in the city of 4.5 million people were lit when the solar energy project got under way. The poor lighting has hampered activity in commercial areas as residents have been afraid to go outside after dark.

The city's existing electric grid, meanwhile, offers unreliable service. Several decades of war and a lack of investment have left Kabul without amenities that many other capitals around the world take for granted.

It turns out that solar lights are a natural fit for the city, said Steve Danner, the Army Corps of Engineers' Kabul area officer in charge.

"They have 300 days of sunshine here, so it just made sense to go with a renewable energy source," he said. "We're working with the mayor on the Kabul City Working Group, and we all said, 'Let's go for solar!' It's the first project of its kind in the country where we're using solar to light up streets."

The 9-meter-tall lights are each equipped with a solar panel and a lithium ion battery that is locked in a box to avoid theft. The contractor who was awarded the initial phase of the project, New Zealand-based Sustainable Energy Services Afghanistan, has trained Kabul city employees to help maintain the lights.

Part of their work is to climb the light pole to dust off the panels. How often that must occur is not yet clear. "It's the first time solar panels have gone up in such a dusty area," Danner said. "It's something we'll have to be monitoring."

Danoo Samim, also of Kabul, said he stopped his car in amazement one night in late December 2010 when driving home from work. A one-kilometer stretch of the formerly dark Jumhoriyat Road was suddenly bright enough for pedestrians to stroll comfortably.

"I said to myself, 'Afghanistan is rebuilding,'" Samim recalled in a comment posted on the U.S. Embassy's Facebook page. "I hope this project [will] continue to [other districts] of Kabul. This is such a good, clean environmental project."

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